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State and Local Obstacles to School Construction

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Report on School Summit

The Center for Urban and Regional Studies

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL
COLLABORATION
and
SCHOOL FACILITY SITING**

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Overall Comments

- School districts don't want to be treated like developers
- Need one set of rules that apply across all municipalities within the county.





Obstacles in School Construction

- State Requirements & Guidelines
 - Minimum acreage standards
 - Stacking restrictions on state roads



Obstacles

- Local Ordinances
 - Different set of rules for each municipality
 - Zoning
 - Buffer requirements
 - Construction along major roads
 - Infrastructure
 - Inspections

Obstacles

- High cost of land





Possible Solutions

Reduce size of school sites

Reduce acquisition costs

Reform permitting process

Consider alternative facilities, e.g., adaptive reuse

Public-private partnerships



Reduce Size of School Sites

- Develop models or prototypes for schools built on smaller sites (Museum Magnet)
- Reduce on-site parking requirements
- Eliminate or reduce buffers
- Build schools that facilitate walking and biking
 - Reduces need for parking
 - Reduces busing (cost savings on bus fleet and gas)

Reduce Site Acquisition Costs

- Joint use of school facilities, e.g., ball fields, gymnasiums
- Land banking
- Donated land





Permitting Reform

- Fast-track permitting
- Identify obsolete ordinances or regulations that can be standardized or streamlined
 - Matrix in Mecklenburg County
- Speed inspections
 - Municipalities use county inspectors in J.C.
 - CMS hired its own inspectors



Consider Alternative Facilities

- Adaptive reuse
 - Old mills, malls, warehouses, big box retail sites,
 - Examples from Wake County:
 - Winn Dixie for 9th grade center
 - Former manufacturing facility

Other Approaches

- Prototype schools
- Modular schools
- Public-private partnerships





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Thank You

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Neighborhood Unit (Perry, 1929)







